

Why are these people  
laughing? (A study of  
Aruban Jokes and Humor).

A — I would welcome  
a copy of this  
paper.

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Field Methods (55-337)  
Dr. Conant  
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There are three things in life which are real-- God, human folly and laughter. The first two are incomprehensible. So we must do what we can with the third.

-Anonymous

In the following paper we will attempt to explain what makes the Arubans laugh. Since laughter and joke telling are universals which differ from place to place only in the situations in which they occur, we felt that a study of the situations which the Arubans find funny would help us to understand them more clearly.

Jokes and humorous tales are told to relieve unbearable circumstances, make fun of those in power, pass an uneventful evening or just to experience the pleasant sensation of laughter. Told most often in unguarded moments, jokes reveal more about the true feelings of a person than if he were asked a direct question about himself. A joke or funny story is like a transparent shield which gives the user the illusion of protection while actually revealing all his vulnerable parts.

It is for this reason that a study of its stories and jokes is so important for the true knowledge of a people's soul. Not every joke that will be discussed can be considered "Aruban", for the reason that the Arubans are influenced to a great extent by other countries as well as by their own internal activities. Therefore, we do not consider this so much a paper on "Aruban humor", but rather, what the Arubans have told us they think is funny. The jokes that make no mention of Aruban place names are as undeniably Aruban as those that do. It is the jokes Arubans accept and laugh at that are important to consider in this paper, for all of them reveal something of Aruban culture and character.

As in the quotation above, we found that God and human folly were topics too difficult on which to write a research paper (besides, where would we find informants?) so we chose laughter, which, we feel, has elements of the first two.

In this section of my essay I will discuss the field methods used to gather data and the conditions under which the research was done. These methods included: open and directed interviewing, use of the tape recorder, participant observation, use of interpreters, questionnaires, note taking at the interviews and the writing up of notes from memory, all of which will be discussed separately below.

#### OPEN and DIRECTED INTERVIEWING

In the course of the research there were six interviews. Two out of six of these took place in informants' offices; two took place in the informants' homes and the other two in our home. At first, for all the interviews, we used the open technique, letting the informants talk of anything they wanted so that we would be able to see how best to steer the conversation to the information we were seeking. In one case, an informant began to show us pictures and items in which we had no interest. We let him talk and show us so that he would give us the same courtesy of listening to us when we began to ask him questions. With another informant at our home, we began by asking about her home life and activities which gradually led into a discussion of matrifocality and kinship jokes.

All the informants knew the reason for our interviews and in two cases got right down to the subject without much outside discussion. In one case in which an informant took us to see another, he acted as interpreter, interviewer and used the directed interviewing technique.

Directed and open interviewing are used very frequently by anthropologists and they are the best ways to get down to the subject and ask the informant just what it is the anthropologist wants to know. There is a one to one contact that might be lacking in other methods.

The interviews done in the course of the research were not always successful. Since we were inexperienced, we needed practise before we could lead the informant into telling us exactly what we wanted to know. On our first interview, for example, the informant seemed not to understand what we wanted,

and when he finally understood, he seemed almost reluctant to give us the information but continued in his own way. It was a most disappointing interview, but one from which we learned a great deal. In the following interviews we were able with greater skill, to get to our own questions and directed interviewing more quickly.

#### USE of the TAPE RECORDER

In three of our six interviews we used the tape recorder successfully. The recorder was a tremendous help in allowing us to hear the exact words that our informants used, their pauses in telling their stories, and even the places where they stopped to laugh at their own jokes. We were very happy when we were able to get a tape recorder for our field work. Obviously, it was so much better than note taking or even shorthand. Unfortunately, not all informants welcomed the use of the tape recorder. In order to honor the wishes of the informant we would ask ahead of time while making an appointment whether the use of a tape recorder would be minded. In one case even though we were given permission over the telephone, we were not allowed to use it when we arrived at the informant's home, and had to take our notes by hand. In another instant, informant promised to give us the tape, but never did. Fortunately, we took notes during the interview in addition to the tape.

The tape recorder is an indispensable tool in the field, especially for someone who does not take shorthand or who wants to focus full attention on the subject being interviewed. I felt there was not very much more to be done to yield better results with the tape recorder as we used it. The one informant's refusal to allow us to use the recorder was unforeseeable and we had to do our best under the circumstances.

#### PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

When friends came to visit, they would often begin to tell jokes and funny stories. Everyone participated and told the jokes they thought were funniest. In order not to let the jokes go to waste (as far as using them for the paper was concerned) we took notes many times during these joke telling ses-

sions and would participate ourselves.

Participant observation is an excellent way to find out just what informants are thinking. To join them in unguarded moments and when they are most relaxed, or involved in an activity will yield maximum results.

#### USE of INTERPRETERS

Friends acting as interpreters were very useful during research. Because many jokes, found in Aruban newspapers were in Papiamento, these interpreters were indispensable. Many times, while they were reading the jokes they were to translate, they would laugh and tell us that the translation would not sound as funny as the original. Other times they would hesitate to translate at all because they thought the jokes were too risqué for us to hear. In the latter case we would go to another friend to translate for us.

In two interviews we needed and made use of interpreters. In the first, the informant's son was our interpreter because his father spoke English poorly. In the second, where an informant acted as interviewer for another informant, the woman interviewed did not speak English at all, so we had to depend entirely on the interpreter.

Naturally many nuances of speech and language escaped us because we were totally unfamiliar with Papiamento or Dutch. Sometimes the interpreter would laugh while talking to an informant and when questioned would say that it was nothing important. Comments, not part of the interview, passed between interpreter and informant and it was frustrating to us because we felt that we missed a lot by not understanding the language. In the second case, the interview of the woman mentioned above, the woman's family was in the room at the time of the interview and occasionally she would make remarks at which everyone laughed, including our interpreter, but these were lost to us, because he did not interpret them for us.

The obvious remedy for the language problem would have been to learn Papiamento, but in our short stay we were not able to use the few phrases we did learn, in our interviews.

The trouble with the use of an interpreter is that upon him very often rests the success of an interview and its value to the interviewer. Key words and comments which might be considered vital to the interviewer's work might be lost because the interpreter did not feel that they were important. Actually, what the interviewer learns is just what the interpreter wants him to know and this can be a great disadvantage for the anthropologist.

#### QUESTIONNAIRE

In our research, we gave about eighty questionnaires out to storekeepers, first in San Nicolas and then in Oranjestad. We told the participants that we would be back to collect the questionnaires in a week. When we returned, only one or two people had filled in the questionnaires; the rest gave us excuses and promised them for the next week. The following week we collected a few more. The final total collected in San Nicolas was ten. For Oranjestad we decided to give stamped self-addressed envelopes to participants to make it easier for them to send their replies back. We spent a lot of time (more than in San Nicolas) explaining exactly what was to be done. Each participant was given explicit directions and promised to send the questionnaire back to us by the end of the week. The day after, we received one questionnaire back from a student who just happened to be standing on the street waiting for a bus with us. The following week, we received another back, completely blank. These two were the only ones we received from Oranjestad. Needless to say, it was a very tiring and frustrating experience, especially since we made sure to give the questionnaires to only those people who wanted them. If someone gave the slightest objection, we did not press him further.

We felt that the questionnaire would be an excellent way to get a cross sampling of jokes and stories. Everyone has some joke to tell and the week we gave them was sufficient to allow them time to think of jokes, ask family and friends, and return their questionnaires. Unfortunately, not everyone took us seri-

ously when we explained that we were writing a research paper and the result was a poor response.

Normally I would say that we would have gotten better results if we had kept going back to remind the questionnaire holders to submit them. However, this is exactly what we did, and still very few responded. We were just not taken seriously and many people really thought we were joking with them when we asked them for jokes.

#### NOTE-TAKING: AT INTERVIEWS and FROM MEMORY

The best place to take notes is at the interview where the thoughts and comments are still fresh in mind. When a tape recorder was not available, note-taking was the only way to record information. Sometimes an informant would look over our shoulders while we were writing. This was distracting and at these times we wished for a tape recorder. In some cases an informant would dislike the taking of notes while he was talking so we had to write the information from memory. Note-taking is an extremely important device of the anthropologist. Every anthropologist uses either pen and pad or the tape recorder to record vital information.

I would make one self-improvement in order to get better results in note taking: learn shorthand. I found great difficulty in writing stories, many of which followed one after the other, in long hand. I had my own system of modified short-hand but it really was not good enough to record jokes very quickly. Frequently I had to ask an informant to tell a joke twice--once for its sense and the second time so that I could record it. In this way I even learned jokes by heart, so that I could often write them up when I returned home.

Because this was my first experience with anthropological interviewing and field methods, I suppose I was rather impatient for everything to work just right--to get back eighty out of eighty questionnaires, be able to write down everything quickly,

We are students at the Aruba Research Center and are doing a study of Aruban jokes and funny stories. If you can help us, please fill out the following questionnaire and send it back to us as soon as possible. Any information you can give us will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely, *Lee Weidman*  
*Carol Pirro*

PLEASE PRINT:

1. Name \_\_\_\_\_
2. Age \_\_\_\_\_
3. Occupation \_\_\_\_\_
4. Family Background \_\_\_\_\_
5. Country of Birth \_\_\_\_\_
6. Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was the funniest thing that ever happened to you?
2. What was the funniest thing you ever saw?
3. Please list any humorous proverbs or riddles you know.
4. List any funny stories or jokes on such topics as:
  - a. politics
  - b. tourists
  - c. family relationships (mothers-in-law, husbands, etc.)
  - d. stories of Aruba in the old days
  - e. interesting local characters, names may be left out.
5. Any humorous stories or jokes about religions on Aruba.
6. Any other humorous tales you may know of.

MASHA DANKIE

At the beginning of our research, an informant commented, "When you tell people a joke down here, it takes half an hour for them to catch on and laugh, but when they see you breaking your neck, they laugh right away." Aruban jokes are not subtle. Most are down to earth (some downright earthy) with few hidden meanings or double entendres. The following section will concern itself with humorous proverbs, riddles, kinship, political, religious and sexual jokes and stories, including those borrowed from the United States.

It was difficult for interviewees and informants reached to think of proverbs. Everyone claimed to have some favorite saying, yet when pressed to remember, suddenly forgot it. The result was a few, select proverbs. The first is an almost Biblical admonishment to be honest:

The truth doesn't prick the tongue  
To tell the truth there is no harm done.

Another is a romanticized version of how life should be and a cruel awakening.

I slept and dreamt that life is beauty  
But I woke and found out that life is duty.

The duty to pay the bill for goods purchased is the theme of the Aruban version of the American "no tickee, no shirtee".

Money in the hands, bananas in the bag, you have to pay before you get the article.

Beer, another precious commodity, is celebrated in this sign found on the wall of a San Nicolas bar:

In the heaven there is no beer,  
Therefore we are drinking it here.

Perhaps a gentleman who took the above advice too seriously prompted the writing of the following:

Macacu sa kwa palu e ta subi  
(to know someone by his doings), literally  
An ape knows what tree to climb.

Proverbs are a basic part of every people's folk culture, dispensing sage advice that is easily understood and remembered. Riddles are another part of folk culture too, that often instruct, yet more often entertain. Riddles are meant to make the solver think and the more confusing the clues are, the better for him to solve:

Q. I had a fight. I beat him. I cracked his skin.  
I drank his blood, ate his meat and threw the  
rest away. Who was he?

A. A coconut.

Q. The one who makes it, sees it. The one who buys  
it doesn't use it, The one who uses it doesn't  
know. What is it?

A. A coffin.

Some of the riddles gathered featured well-known characters.

Q. How can you tell Adam and Eve in heaven from  
the rest of the people?

A. They have no belly buttons.

And some took advantage of the situation to introduce a little moral lesson:

Q. What is the difference between the devil and  
the shoemaker?

A. The devil takes souls, and the shoemaker makes  
souls.

As many facts and numbers as possible were crowded into the next riddle to tangle the riddle unraveler.

Q. I was going to Sinoils  
I met seven men  
Each had seven sacks  
Each sack had seven cats  
Each cat had seven kittens  
How many were going to Sinoils?

A. Only myself. The men weren't going. They were coming  
from Sinoils.

The above riddle is very reminiscent of the English  
"As I was going to St. Ives"...etc.

A knowledge of geography is needed for the next two:

Q. Which language is spoken the most every day?

A. Chinese.

Q. What's the difference between a plane and a baby?

A. A plane goes from city to city.

A baby goes from titty to titty.

Finally the eternal riddle asked about the marriage hungry woman:

Q. What kind of money does a girl like best?

A. Matrimony.

In most countries there are jokes centering around the head of the family, and the joke is: Who is the head of the family? In Latin countries in particular, there is a greatly felt need by men to overtly manifest their masculinity. If a man does not prove himself by some feat-usually sexual, he is only half a man. This will be discussed later under "sexual" jokes, but here kinship is stressed. The following jokes illustrate two points of view:

Heaven has two doors- one for the family where the husband is the ruler, and the other for the family where the wife is the ruler. The husbands' line had only one man on it. The wives' line had many husbands. The one man on the husbands' line was scrawny and nervous-looking. St. Peter came to the gate and asked "What's a man like you doing on this line?" He replied, "I don't know. My wife told me to stand here."

#### "The Potato Peeler"

A woman asked her husband who has a "by-side" (mistress)

"What time is your friend coming?"

He said: "10 o'clock, why?"

She: "Oh I just wanted to know how much more time I have to peel a few more potatoes."

The jealous or nagging wife is a popular topic for jokes.

A man came home one evening and his wife found a blonde hair on his shirt.

"You have a blonde by-side", she said. The man denied it.

The next night his wife found a red hair on his shirt.

"You have a red-headed by-side", she said. He denied it.

The following night she found a brown hair.  
 "You have a brunette by-side," she nagged.  
 He again denied it. Finally the husband came home and the wife looked all over his shirt for another piece of hair. When she couldn't find anything, she said; "You have a bald-headed by-side now."

Wife to husband: The woman next door doesn't do any housework. Every day she gossips.

Husband: With whom does she gossip?

Wife: With me, of course.

Because members of an entire Aruban family often live in one house, or in very close proximity to one another mother-in-law jokes are easily adaptable to Aruban life:

A man had to buy a gift for his mother-in-law. His wife said; "Oh look at this pretty rocking chair. Why don't we buy it for mother?"

Husband: "That is not the kind of chair I'd like to get for her."

Wife: "Okay, what kind should we get for her?"

Husband: "Let's buy her an electric chair".

"So you're not drinking any more Charlie?"

"Not any more my friend. And do you want to know who cured me? My mother-in-law. Every time I drink, I see double.

Children are sometimes in the middle of arguments between parents, which might result in childish doubts:

"Why are you crying?"

"Because mama called papa a donkey and papa called mama a camel".

"That's not important".

"No? Then what am I-can you tell me?"

The son in the Latin family is one of its most cherished possessions. A father expresses his thoughts on the ideal son:

Antonio: You have a child, too?

Bernardo: Yes, a son.

Ant: He never goes into the shop?

Ber: No, not even one step.

Ant: Does he smoke?

Ber: A cigarette has never touched his lips.

Ant: You have a very perfect son; it would certainly be hard to have another like him. How old is he?

Ber: Two months.

Grandparents, especially grandfathers are treated with great deference, but are often used in an Aruban joke as a loving foil for a grandchild's remark:

William to grandfather(a captain in the army)  
 "Grandfather,you were a good boy-is that why you have such beautiful medals on your coat?"  
 Grandfather:"No my son, that's because they thought I fought very well".  
 William:"That's strange grandaddy-because whenever I fight I always get a good beating from mother".

Mario: Grandfather,what's a desert?  
 Grand: A desert is a big place where nothing can grow.  
 Mario: Then grandfather,is your head also a desert?

I should note that my informant thought this joke was extremely funny but did not tell me why.

Even the naming of a child has its problems:

A cunucu(countryside) man went to the Priest and said "I want to baptize my son".  
 Priest: What do you want to name him?  
 Cunucu: Tom.  
 Priest: Why not make it longer? Call him Thomas.Just add a s at the end". The man agreed.  
 The next year the cunucu man returns to the priest."I want to name this son Jack, but this time don't put the last letters on".

The next two stories are from the questionnaires handed out, in answer to requests for stories on kinship. The first is not the conventional idea of "humorous", but it is noteworthy because the writer thought it was funny. The second story is in a lighter vein.

When I first fell in love, I fell in love with a wonderful guy. I took him home to my parents. When I entered, my father looked at my mother very funny. He called me and told me that the guy is my brother by mother side.  
 I almost fainted away.  
 So then they talked with him about not falling in love with me cause I'm his sister. But he already knew that my mother is his mother also. So,when-ever we meet again, we always laugh at each other.

My uncle had no sense of orientation. Once he visited friends in a neighborhood where all the houses looked alike.

He entered the house and there was nobody home. He sat down, smoked a cigar, he went to the bathroom-no toilet paper- so he looked around until he found it. He went into the kitchen, took a beer, chocolate, an apple.

He sat in the living room, read a paper, and was very impatient.

He wrote a letter: "Dear friends, I was here! Smoked a cigar, drank a beer and so on. Thanks a lot. Rene."

P.S. next time I come see to it there's toilet paper in the bathroom."

Later on he found out he had been in the wrong house.

The governing body of every nation is a target for criticism, however mild, from without, but the most criticism usually comes from within. Aruba has two main political parties-the A.V.P. (Arubanse Volksparty) and the P.P.A. (Partido Patriatrico Arubano). Briefly, the A.V.P. wants Aruba to be better represented in the Legislative Council of the Netherlands Antilles, besides its complete independence from the other islands. The P.P.A. wants to unite the different nationalities of the Netherland Antilles more strongly. With this in mind it is not difficult to see why the two parties are always arguing.

One man was talking to another. The first man said he was a member of the A.V.P.

"Why are you a member of the A.V.P.?", asked his companion.

"Because my mother, father, sister and grandfather are members", said the first man.

"Well, what if they were jackasses? Would you follow them then?"

"No, then I'd be a member of the P.P.A.

A different joke, but with the same theme:

A parrot belonged to a family whose members belonged to the A.V.P. Two people got into an argument over politics. A man from the P.P.A. taught the parrot to say, "I love the P.P.A."

When the owner came home, the parrot said, "God bless the P.P.A. I love the P.P.A." The owner was so angry that he threw the parrot in the chicken coop.

The next morning the rooster got up and went to the chicken coop, looking for a hen. He approached the parrot angrily. The parrot realized what the rooster was looking for and said, "Listen, I didn't come here for that. I'm here for political reasons".

Politics is rarely a straightforward business, but almost always a confusing one as illustrated in these next two jokes:

At a meeting a speaker spoke with fury in Papiamentu. A foreign seaman stopped in to listen. At the end of the meeting the seaman said, "I don't understand a word of what he said, but he's right."

In a pamphlet a certain party gave out, it read as follows: "What Mr. A. of party A said at a public meeting is so shameful that it can't be repeated for civilized people like the distinguished Aruban public..." and then went on to repeat what could not be repeated for the distinguished Aruban public.

One informant told us a story which he said happened in 1964 when the Queen of Holland and the Prince visited the Netherland Antilles.

The Lt. Governor of the Antilles said to Prince Bernard (both drunk): "I'll make you a bet on who's going to push the Queen into that swimming pool". The Lt. Governor, a fat man hit her with his belly but could not push her in. Prince Bernard tried and she fell into the water. While this was going on, the Lt. Governor pushed Bernard into the water too.

Two informants, answering the questionnaire on "politics", recall similar occurrences at a political meeting.

I went to a political meeting where the head of the present political party (unspecified) got up to speak. As soon as he said his first word, someone threw a spoiled egg in his face. Since then, he walks around with his guards all over town.

Once they had a meeting in a small country. They start the meeting and many people went to the meeting. Sometimes they begin to insult people. Somebody who was standing threw rotten eggs and tomatoes at the man who was talking. That was something funny to see his face.

For the most effective political satire the mention of

the name of a powerful man brings instant recognition and laughter:

Minister Petronia of Aruba is not liked in Curacao. One day Minister Jonckheer (of Curacao) was walking to a meeting of the island's Council and took a short-cut through the park. When passing the statue of Simon Bolivar, the statue stopped him and said, "Jonckheer, look how nice you look, nice and white and not burned by the sun. But, look at me. I am made of bronze and all black by the sun. Jonckheer when you get to the meeting, I want you to ask them if they would give me a horse so when it gets too hot I could take a ride and get out of the sun. Now, promise me you will do so, Jonckheer." So when Jonckheer got to the meeting he told them about his experience. And they agreed that Bolivar should get his horse, all except Petronia. "A statue cannot talk", he said. So Jonckheer decided to take Petronia to see for himself. When they got there, Bolivar was awaiting them, as he had seen them coming. Bolivar said, "Jonckheer, I asked you for a horse and you brought me a monkey."

An informant told a funny true story of the time when he accidentally met the Lt. Governor:

When I was smaller, my friends and I used, for adventure, to sneak into the Lt. Governor's yard and steal the tangerines off his tree. One day, things were going fine. I was up in the tree throwing the tangerines to my friends below. I shouted, "Here's one for you, and you, and you." I turned around to get more off the tree when I heard a strange voice, "and how about one for me?" the Lt. Governor shouted.

About eighty percent of Aruba's population is Catholic, so it is not unusual for the priest to be the butt of many jokes--some gentle, some caustic.

When the first priest came to Aruba, he had to convince the Arubans that there really was a God, so he sent his assistant to the market to buy fruits to throw down from the ceiling of the church when the priest desired. So, in church, the priest said "God send grapes and apples!" Grapes and apples fell from the ceiling. "God, send oranges", and the oranges fell. "God, send bananas," and the assistant shouted "The market had no bananas."

A cunucu man bought some land. After a year he cultivated it and worked hard to enable it to grow some crops. A priest passed; "You did a good job with God's

help," He said. "Yes " said the curucu man, "but you should have seen what it was like when God did it Himself."

An Aruban stole a sheep from a priest. He went to confession and confessed. The priest said, "You will be forgiven if you return the sheep to the man from whom you took it." The man said, "Father can I give you the sheep?"

The priest: No my son. I don't want the sheep.

The man: Oh well, I tried being honest.

A comment on priests and Lago:

There was an Aruban working for Lago. After coming home from work, a priest went to visit him. The priest said, "My son, give a donation to the poor and old of the Church."

Aruban: "Father, I work very hard, with just enough money to support my family."

Priest: "You'd even refuse Jesus Christ?"

Aruban: "When Jesus Christ came, he came on a donkey. If you sell you Cadillac and come to see me on a donkey as Jesus did, then I might help you."

In a few cases laymen take it upon themselves to play the part of the priest and fool their friends:

When Arubans want to have a party, they have to get permission from the priest. A man in Santa Cruz gave a party without telling the priest, thinking the priest would never know.

After a short time, a white figure came dashing into the house. It looked like a ghost. People thought God was after them because they did not tell the priest. They soon found out it was only a joke- Someone had put a sheet on a donkey. Later, a man came in looking like the priest. Everyone laughed at this joke, only this time it wasn't a joke.

A man from the Esso Club used to like to play tricks on people. He could imitate the voice of the priest. One day he called the people who were giving a party and said, "I heard that you're giving a party and I will not permit it." Weeks later he saw the people and asked, "How was your party?" They said, "The priest called and wouldn't allow it, so we never did have one."

Two true stories about religious charlatans:

A man wanted to know what his wife had been up to, so he put on a cassock and went to hear the lady's confession and found out all her secrets.

A boy goes to confession, takes the priest's clothes and sits in the box. When an old lady comes in he runs out.

Irreverence crops up even in religious jokes:

There was a captain who had a parrot. Anytime anyone would die on ship the captain always said: "Throw his ass overboard." Once the ship entered the harbor and a priest begged the captain to sell him the parrot. There was a funeral later in the priest's church and the priest was praying near the coffin. The parrot came over to the altar and said: "Throw his ass overboard."

Churchill, Nixon and Krushchev meet in heaven. Churchill asked: "How many children by by-side?" "I have one", he replies. "All right, there's a Cadillac for you." To Nixon St. Peter said "How many by by-side?" "Six", replies Nixon. "You get a Volkswagen", says St. Peter. To Krushchev: "How many by by-side?" "Ten", replies Krushchev. "You get a Fiat," says St. Peter. All drive away and as they meet at a cross-road, the Pope is coming toward them on a skate.

One young Aruban relates an early experience which he felt was funny.

When I was a little boy, I used to be told that if I were bad, the devil would come in the middle of the night and take me from my parents. Needless to say, I behaved my best from that time on.

Machismo, the need to feel "manly", have many children and be able to support them all is an important facet of all Latin cultures. Because of this, many sexual jokes and true stories that informants considered funny involve the concept of machismo and the lack of it.

A man told his friend: "You are feeding and supporting another man's child." Enraged at the thought of his wife having a by-side, he went home and argued with her.

"But I swear, these are all your children," said the wife. The man went back to his friend and said: "You must be lying-my wife swore that all my children are my own". "That is true, but you are feeding and supporting your wife and she is another man's child."

A little boy was sitting on a curb and crying.

Grandfather: Why are you crying?

Little boy: Because I cannot do what that big boy is doing.

Grandfather sits down next to little boy after think-

ing for a while, and starts to cry too.

A young couple just got married. The first night passed, nothing happened. The second and third nights passed the same way. The woman got scared and went to her mother. She said, "I cannot stay with a man like that. It is just impossible." Her mother replied, "Get up tomorrow, get dressed and if he asks you where you are going, tell him you're going to look for a man." The woman did this. When her husband asked where she was going she replied, "To find a man", as instructed to do. "Oh good," said the husband, "bring me back one too."

When one's machismo is challenged, arguments fly:

Mexican man: In Mexico we're all he-men.  
Aruban: Oh yeah? Well in Aruba we have fifty percent men and fifty percent women and we all have a good time.

There was an Aruban who went away to Curacao for a long time. When he got back he found his wife with a baby. He yelled, "Which one of my friends did it?" "Was it Victor?" Wife: "No." "Was it Hector?" "No." "Joe?" "No" she replied. "Well then which friend was it?" "Well my dear," his wife answered, "Can't I have a friend too?"

Two lovers were sitting together on a bench in the park holding hands. After three hours the girl says, "You remind me of Don Juan." "But he's dead," he says. "That's what I mean," she says.

There was a band playing at a party. The announcer said, "This is dedicated to newlyweds." He played "Day and Night". The announcer said "This next song is dedicated to those married ten years." He played "Once in a While". Then he said "This song is dedicated to those married for sixty years." He played, "I Did it Once and I'll Do it Again." Just as the party was finishing, an old man ran up to him and said, "Play 'Memories'."

Two interesting entries on the questionnaire in answer to "what was the funniest thing you ever saw?":

The funniest thing I ever saw was a man dressed in ladies' clothes.

In the carnival time we saw a boy. He was dressed up

very funny, half girl, half boy. With long hair one side and the other side like a boy. With long dress and other side trouser leg. It was something very funny to see. Carnival time is a very crazy time.

Similar to the joke in the previous section about the Pope's dalliance, the priest in the following does not escape a ribbing:

A priest was visiting a family about 8 P.M. It started to rain. The head of the family said, "You can sleep here tonight." The priest said, "No it's all right. I'll wait for the rain to stop." At 10 P.M. it was still raining. The man repeated, "You can sleep on the couch, priest." "No I'll wait," said the priest. At 12:00 the man said, "It's still raining. You can sleep with baby." "No, babies make too much noise" said the priest. At 2 A.M. someone was in the kitchen. The priest went in. He saw a twenty one year old woman. "Who are you?" he asked, "I am baby," she said. "Oh!" said the priest, "If I knew that I would have been sleeping a long time ago."

The Catholic church in Aruba is known for helping the poor. One day a little girl was walking naked through the churchyard. The priest saw her and called her over. He gave her five guilders and told her to buy a dress. She went home and told her mother. Her mother then went to the church and when she saw the priest, she took off her clothes. When he saw her, he covered his eyes and said, "Here, lady, Here is a guilder, go buy yourself a hairnet."

Pseudo-religious riddle and proverb are good excuses to laugh:

Q. What's the difference between a man in church and a woman in the bathtub?

A. A man in church has his soul full of hope, while a woman in the bathtub has her hole full of soap.

Man who goes to bed with sex problems on mind wakes up with solution in hand.

Children are sometimes the main subject of a sexual joke in which they make innocent remarks that might easily be misconstrued.

Little Johnny used to suck his finger. His mother said: "Don't suck your finger, or you will get a big stomach." One day he was with his mother in town.

He saw a pregnant woman. He said to her: "I know what you've been doing."

A boy went with his father to buy a cow. He saw his father rub the back of the cow. He said "Daddy, why do you do that?"

The father answered: "That is how we see if the animal is good to buy."

Next day, at home, the postman came and mother and boy ran outside. Boy comes running inside: "Daddy come quick, the postman is testing to buy mommy."

Animals given human qualities act out sexual fantasies.

A zebra wanted to make love to a donkey. He said:

"Donkey, I love you." The donkey didn't move or answer.

Zebra: "Donkey, I want to make love to you."

No response from the donkey.

Zebra: "You are a jackass. I'm trying to make love to you and you won't even move."

Donkey: "Do you know what I'm thinking? I'm thinking of how to get those pajamas off of you."

An unusual statistic presented by an informant:

2% of Aruban men get up at night to go to the toilet.

2% of Aruban men get up to eat something.

96% get up to go home.

And a fascinating conjecture:

Peter: The man who invented the double bed must be rich.

Paul: Why?

Peter: Because millions have been made in it.

American jokes, to a great degree, influence Aruban jokes. The jokes that were translated from newspapers were mainly Aruban versions of American jokes, changing guilder for dollar and Papiamentu titles for English.

UN Maracco Spier toe (A bright monkey)

Son: Dad, give me a guilder to buy a monkey.

Dad: We already have a monkey, you.

Son: Well, Dad, give me a guilder to buy a banana for the monkey.

The meeting of two Laurel and Hardy type characters is a popular and universally funny joke.

Esaki Si! (This, yes!)

Did I ever meet you before, sir?

Not that I know of.

Did we meet in New York?

I was never there.

I was never there either.

Then it must be two different people.

The joke about the judge and the smart convict is also from the United States.

Su Derecho (His right)

Judge: Do you still refuse to admit it? I have three witnesses who saw you do it.

Accused: Well, I can get more than 100 who didn't.

The universal jokes about the innocent doings of children also crop up in the Aruban paper-jokes which are from the United States.

Little boy: Sir, would you please change the stamp I bought this morning? Father licked it, mother licked it, my aunts licked it and still it won't stick.

Un Pakico Stranjoe (A little bit strange)

Mother: Why are you jumping so much Dora?

Dora: Because I didn't shake the bottle before I took the medicine.

Jokes and funny stories are universal as is laughter and the country of origin of a joke makes no difference when they are told to sweeten the bitter medicine of life.

This next section of the paper will deal with five other categories of humor. They will be:

1. Old Aruba
2. Local Characters
3. Ethnic Jokes
4. Tourism
5. Communication

The jokes on Old Aruba will reveal the past of Aruba and show what some of the older citizens of Aruba remember as humorous.

The second category included in this part of the paper is of Local Characters. Since Aruba is such a small island, people obtain recognition easily and any humorous character, or out-of-the-ordinary character soon becomes well known.

Because Aruba is a pluralistic island, there are many ethnic groups. It can, therefore, be expected that ethnic jokes will arise in such a society.

With Tourism being so popular today on Aruba, many jokes have been made on this subject. This section, then, will deal with the attitudes of Arubans towards tourists in a humorous way.

The fifth section, on Communication jokes, is of particular interest. On Aruba, there are numerous languages spoken. This often leads to misunderstanding which can lead to an embarrassing or humorous situation.

## OLD ARUBA

This section deals with humor of Aruba years ago. It includes both jokes of the "old times" and stories by Arubans about experiences they have had in their earlier years on Aruba.

Long ago, Aruba's only means of transportation was the donkey. Consequently, many jokes have developed about the donkey. Some donkey jokes are:

In the old days, people had to go to Oranjestad on donkey. An old man took his donkey and his dog. He walked the entire day to go into town. Towards the end of the day the man, his donkey and his dog started back home. The old man wanted to hurry, but the donkey was stubborn and would not move. The man yelled at the donkey, but the donkey just looked at him and said, "I'm tired." Frightened, the man ran with his dog and did not stop until he reached home. Now the man is exhausted and sits down to rest. The dog stretches out near the man and says, "I'm tired too!"

One informant, in referring to this, mentioned Arubans were superstitious. It was considered evil to mistreat animals. Therefore, this joke, aside from being humorous from the point of view that animals can not talk, has a double meaning in the sense of the superstition stemming from the old man's mistreatment of the animal.

Another joke about animals is one given by another informant. This is not so much a joke, but rather an expression of what he considers to be one of the funniest things he ever saw. He claims, "The funniest thing I ever saw happened a long time ago. I saw a sea captain driving down Mainstraat on a donkey after World War II." This seemed to be very funny because at that time, cars were populating the street and the sea captain was quite a conspicuous sight being the only man on a donkey on a busy street in San Nicolas.

Another situation was given to me on "old Aruba" and donkeys. One woman revealed that long ago at the age of fifteen, she was afraid of donkeys. She once went to town with her aunt on a donkey. It had been raining on Aruba for seven days. The paths were very muddy. She approached a large pool. Her aunt decided to get off the donkey because the donkey must have been extremely tired. She told her niece to poke the donkey so it would walk on. The girl did; the donkey walked straight into the pool of muddy water. The donkey stopped in the center of the pool. Her aunt began making wild movements with her arm to persuade the donkey to move. Finally, the first car to be seen on Aruba passed and the aunt, the girl and the donkey were completely covered with mud. The girl was never asked to go into town again.

This "joke" is by no means hilarious. However, it does reveal something of the Aruban sense of humor. Like so many, often a very embarrassing situation will later be told as a

humorous story. This, then is such a case. As the girl grew older, she remembered this as "the funniest thing that ever happened to me."

Another humorous situation was revealed by another informant. She was not native to Aruba, and like most Aruba Research Center students, had to adapt in many ways. Moreover, she arrived at a time when Aruba was even less advanced in its technology. Her story was as follows: "When I first came to Aruba with my husband, in 1930, there was no light nor running water. At night, my husband took me to the bush which we used as a washroom. When I sat down, I sat on a cactus. I jumped five feet high and screamed."

This again, is not so much a hysterically funny joke, but again it does reveal the rather, simple, jovial humor of the people, and again reveals a once painful situation which is now remembered as a humorous one.

This section is rather brief, but it does reveal a sense of humor expressed by the older members of Aruba, thereby giving a bit of a cross-section on what people think is or was funny.

## LOCAL CHARACTERS

This section will deal with local characters on Aruba. Because of the island's small size, individuals are often known throughout the island. One's characteristic can be told by many, since everyone knows so much about fellow Arubans. Therefore, this section will list jokes collected revealing humorous characters (and some of their idiosyncrasies) on Aruba.

Edwin D. is known among many of his friends for his speedy driving. One day he was stopped by the police. "Show me your license" said on policeman. Edwin took out his driving license and showed it. "Not your driving license," said the policeman, "Your pilot license, this car was flying."

This can show how a joke like this will be affective on a small island like Aruba and not a big city. When some other Arubans heard this joke, they laughed and replied "That's just like Edwin."

Another local joke is as follows:

One Aruban who was known among his friends for his excessive drinking asked a friend. "Can you lend me three gilders for a drink?" His friend checked his pockets and replied "I'm sorry, but I only have two gilders." "That's alright," replied the man "I'll take the two gilders now and you can owe me one gilder."

This is a perfect example of a local joke. On Aruba, many are aware of the drinking situation. Some informants

have stated being repulsed by seeing so many Arubans indulged in such a great quantity of drinks. However, many informants consider this matter a humorous one. I have heard this joke before in New York. However, the joke made no reference to drinking when I first heard it. It can be assumed, therefore, that the locality of the joke can change the joke somewhat, from a matter of simply borrowing money (which is a very American problem) to a matter of needing a few gilders for a drink, which is not solely Aruban, but quite a problem to the Aruban population.

Another joke of drinking Arubans is:

A man and his wife had colds. They went to the clinic and told the doctor of their conditions. The doctor asked, "What are you taking for your colds?" The man replied, "We're drinking tea and rum." The doctor then asked, "How do you like that combination?" The man then replied, "It's great, my wife drinks the tea and I drink the rum."

Of course, this joke has humor to it from any culture, but, of course, rum is quite dominant among the Aruban drinkers and some informants say that some Arubans would rather have rum for a cold than take medication.

Another common aspect of Aruba is the fishermen. Any Arubans who know fishermen know how they tend to exaggerate. Aside from enjoying the tales of fishermen, they also enjoy joking about them. An example of such a joke is:

There was a fisherman who always exaggerated. He was at sea for sixteen days and finally saw a big whale. He

took a picture and had it developed in New York. He came back to Aruba talking about the fish. He said, "The picture itself weighed sixteen pounds, you can imagine how big the fish was!"

Many small communities have their local miser. I was informed of a miser on Aruba whom all Arubans are familiar with. The informant did not want to reveal the miser's name but said that the joke was told to Arubans and all Arubans always knew whom the joke was referring to.

A man tried to get into heaven. Saint Peter came and told him there are three things he must do first:

1. He must pick up all the stones on Aruba. So, the man worked and returned when the job was completed.

2. Next Saint Peter said "Take all the water from Aruba and place it somewhere else in the world." The man went to Aruba and did this and returned to heaven when the work was done.

3. "Finally" said Saint Peter "You need only to go to Mr. X (the miser everyone knows about) and ask him to give you five guilders to get you into heaven." The man went to the miser but hasn't returned to heaven's gate since.

The most local event on Aruba is Carnival. It would only be natural, therefore, that jokes would gradually develop about this event. I have obtained two such jokes on Carnival.

One informant said that during Carnival, a man dressed up as half girl/half boy, with long hair on one side and short hair on the other. He wore a dress on one side and a trouser

leg on the other. Now, with longhaired boys becoming increasing on Aruba, people may refer to one as being as indistinguishable as the man in Carnival, creating their own private joke.

Another Carnival joke is about one of the important men on Aruba, Ito Tromp. Ito, one of the best informants one could hope for, claims to be teased frequently about his ears. He states that during Carnival, Arubans who are looking for costumes run around saying, "Rent Ito's ears, rent Ito's ears."

This section gives some idea of the influence local events and characters have on the humor of Aruba. Just as all local communities might have a joke about a local character, or a country might have a joke about a national figure, Aruba also has its humor about its own local characters.

# ETHNIC JOKES

Aruba is a highly pluralistic society with many ethnic groups. Consequently, there are many ethnic jokes on Aruba. This section, then, will show some of the ethnic jokes collected. Each ethnic joke, however, does not mean that there is really hostility between groups, but nonetheless, if it is worth laughing about, there is obviously some importance in and awareness of the matter.

One aspect of the ethnic joke category is racism. A few such jokes have been given. It might be of some significance to explain here that one informant told me that on Aruba, despite the beautiful sun and white sand beaches, many Arubans try to get in the shade, to stay as light as possible, since discrimination ranges with skin shade.

One joke deals with employment. A black man went to get a job on Radio Victoria. He walked in stuttering, "Ah-Ah-Ah-I wa-wa-want a-a-a ja-ja-job on da-da ra-ra-di-o." The announcer in charge replied "I'm sorry sir, but I can't give you the job." The man asked, "Wa- Wa-why nah-nah-not?" Announcer: "Because, sir, to speak on radio, one must have a good speaking voice." The man asked, "Wah-wa-what's wrong wi-wi-wit' ma-ma-my voice?" The announcer replied, "You stutter, sir" he replied. "I'm sorry, but you simply can't have the job." So, the man went home to his wife.

She asked, "Did you get the job?" "Na-na-no" he answered. "Why not?" she asked. "Wh-wh-why else?" -- "Ba-ba-because Ah-ah-I'm bla-bla-black!"

Some background to this prejudice was given by another informant. She claimed that years ago, when people of Aruba saw "colored people" Arubans used to run away. When "colored people" used to visit an Aruban's house, the women used to run and leave the men to take care of the "colored people." This helps explain why some Blacks on Aruba not only are discriminated against, but are aware of this as well.

Another ethnic joke is:

The first Negro president was interviewed by a reporter and was asked what his first plan was. The president replied, "The first thing I'm going to do is to get my secretary to stop calling me BOY."

This shows the derogatory attitude often placed on Blacks. Many times, they are referred to as "Boy" all their lives.

Another ethnic jokes is on education. Years ago, only the elite were able to attend school. Recently, however, school has been opened to all who wish to attend. Naturally there has been an increase in the black population in the schools. The following joke reveals such a situation:

There was only one black boy who attended a school of predominantly white students. He was very dark, and his fellow students called him "midnight." A few weeks later,

another black boy entered, and the students also called him "midnight". The new boy took this as an insult and replied, "Don't call me midnight, because you're just half-past eleven."

Another ethnic group I found commonly joked about is the Chinese. In San Nicolas, many of the restaurants and stores are run by the Chinese. Some Arubans told me that jokes are sometimes said of Chinese because they are so ambitious. They usually come to Aruba and open a shop and are able to maintain a fairly decent life. (In contrast to the stereotyped Aruban who is considered to have no ambition) In contrast to the ambition of the Chinese, some jokes are of the simplicity of the Chinese. One such joke is as follows:

A Chinese man took a driving test. The instructor said, "Stop in front of the movie if you see my car there. If my car is not there yet, go around the block again and do not park until you see a car, is that clear?" Then, to be sure he was understood, he asked, "Now, what will you do if you do not see a car outside the movie?" The Chinese man answered, "If I do not see a car parked outside, I will go home, the movie must be no good."

Another joke about Chinese simplicity is:

An Aruban man was deceitful of his wife. He thought she had been seeing another man. He wanted to get someone to follow her around. Knowing of the Chinese's eagerness to make some money, he asked a Chinese man to follow her. The Chinese man gave his consent. He followed the wife and saw her meet another man and enter a hotel with him. The Chinese

man climbed a tree to get a view into the window where the wife and her lover were. The Chinese man returned to the Aruban husband, completely bruised. The Aruban asked, "Well, what happened? Did you find her?" "Oh yes" said the Chinese man, "I found her and followed her completely." "Well," said the Aruban, "What happened?" The Chinese man replied, "They went to hotel, I climbed up in tree to watch and follow, Then, he play with she, and she play with he, and so me play with me and fall off the tree."

This again helps to express the attitude of simplicity on the part of the Chinese on the island.

The following ethnic joke includes not only Chinese, but Arubans and Jews as well. However, this joke is on the Jew, having the same stereotyped idea about Jews as one would find in the United States.

An Aruban, A Chinese man and a Jewish man were friends. They made a deal that when one of the three friends died, the two others would put twenty-five guilders in the dead man's coffin. The Chinese man died first. The Aruban put the twenty-five guilders in the coffin. The Jew took the twenty-five guilders and wrote out a check for fifty guilders and placed it in the coffin.

This joke reveals, therefore, the same idea of the "cheap Jew" as can be found in the United States.

Among ethnic jokes, one informant contributed a joke on Indians. Aruba has a background of Indians (as the United States) and consequently, an ethnic joke of this type would

be easy for one to relate to.

An Indian and a white man were friends. They were on a hike together when they were surrounded by Indians who were ready to attack. The whiteman looked at his Indian friend and said, "It looks like we're in real trouble now." The Indian looked at the other Indians and then back to his white friend and said, "Oh no -- we're not in real trouble -- white man's in real trouble."

This section, then, hopefully goes to show some of the jokes which develop in a pluralistic society, where one would be exposed to various ethnic groups and able to joke about physical and cultural differences that exist in such a society.

## TOURISM

This fourth section will deal with tourism on Aruba. Aruba now is a growing tourist attraction. However, since this is quite a recent change, there is bound to be some talk and various attitudes on the part of the Arubans to the tourism. I have been able to obtain a number of such jokes expressing the influence of tourism and the attitudes toward it.

The first three jokes are not what would be considered genuine jokes, but rather some humorous interactions between tourists and Arubans that some informants have related.

One informant stated that he once was approached by a tourist who asked him "What does Aruba N.A. stand for? Is it Aruba. North Africa?"

Another informant told of another such interaction. One day a tourist was walking around town with her bikini on. She apparently thought that all Aruba was a beach, and did not realize the need for proper dress in town. The police saw her and had to drive her back to her hotel to get her off the streets immediately.

Still another interaction between tourist and Aruban was related as follows:

A sales girl working in San Nicolas met a tourist. The tourist asked, "How many more blocks to Oranjestad?"

Any tourist can give stories of humorous or embarrassing

situations they have had in a strange land. But here we have the reactions of the humorous situations on the part of the people of the island.

A number of jokes were told about tourists on Aruba. To Arubans, Americans are stereotyped as being extremely rich. A joke about a rich American tourist is as follows:

An American came to Aruba on vacation, staying at the Caribbean Hotel. He was bragging about skin diving. He bought the most expensive gear and was bragging about the price. While he was about to dive, he noticed an Aruban with only a swim suit on. The American dives into the water, wearing his new, expensive diving equipment. When he reaches ten feet, he sees the Aruban passing under him. Somewhat amazed that this could be done by an Aruban wearing only a swim suit, he is determined to out-do the Aruban and show off his expensive equipment. The American goes down fifty feet and still sees the Aruban floating under him. He then goes down seventy-feet to out-do the Aruban. Still, he sees the Aruban swimming under him. The American, now both angry and confused writes a note to the Aruban saying, "Why are you able to follow me in only a swim suit, when I spent so much money on this skin diving equipment?" The Aruban handed back the note to the American which said -- "I'm Drowning!"

Although the punchline of this joke does not have to do with the American, this joke does reveal the attitude of many typical tourists who think that because of their

money they are far better than the natives living on the land they are touring.

Another stereotyped joke on American tourists is on fashion. Female American tourists are known around Oranjestad easily by their extra short mini-skirts. One such joke is:

There was a tourist from New York who was standing outside the Aruba Bank. She was wearing a mini skirt. Two bandits came and robbed the bank. Nassaustraat was crowded, but everyone claimed not to be looking inside the bank and there were no witnesses who saw the robbery. Finally, the police asked the tourist about it, trying to get a witness and to find out why no one's attention was drawn to the bank at that time. The New York tourist replied, "I don't know officer, you see just at that time, the tradewind blew my skirt over my head and I couldn't see a thing."

These two previous jokes have implication of stereotyped attitudes about the American tourist. One further attitude that is always of concern when two different cultures are involved is the ethnocentric attitude that one's values and culture is the best. This can be seen in the following joke:

Aruban man: "This is my best goat; it's two years old."

City Slicker: "How do you know how old it is?"

Aruban Man: "I can tell by its horns."

City Slicker: "Oh, I see, two years, two horns!"

This gives some idea of the Aruban thinking the City tourist is dumb, or funny for not knowing such information about goats, whereas the tourist might think such information is irrelevant for a man in his own culture, showing the contrast of values in different cultures.

## COMMUNICATION

This fifth section of jokes is on the problem of or humor of communication on Aruba. Since Aruba has so many ethnic groups and so many languages spoken, it is often the case when there is a miscommunicated idea because of the language barrier. Consequently, many jokes have arisen on this topic and many puns about the languages have developed. This section will relate some of the funnier sides to the communication problems on Aruba.

Anyone familiar with Aruba knows of the great influence Lago's oil refinery has on the island. Lago employs a large integrated staff. Many of the communication jokes deal with the different languages spoken by the various employees of Lago who came to Aruba to work. The following jokes, therefore, will show how easy it is for miscommunication on Aruba with so many languages spoken by so many people, which often leads to a humorous situation.

In 1928, Lago first established itself and employed an international staff, including Arubans. An Aruban working on Job #278 was carrying sand to San Nicolas. The American checker asked the Aruban, "Are you Job 278?" The Aruban answered, "No, I'm not going to Savenata, I'm going to San Nicolas."

Before telling the next joke, one brief explanation must be made. "Holi" in Papiaments means "to smell."

An American was working for Lago. One day there

was a leak in a pipe. He told his Aruban co-worker to "hold" the pipe until he got back. The Aruban shrugged, not seeing any significance in this but went over to "smell" the pipe as he was told.

The following joke is also one about Lago:

An American boss at Lago employed an Aruban. He heard that one Aruban had cows and went to the Aruban's house to see them. The Aruban tried to impress the boss by calling the cow and calves by what he thought were their American names. Remembering words he heard before, he pointed to the cow and said, "This is my cow" and pointed to the calves and said, "These are my cow-boys."

The next Lago joke deals with an American and a Dutchman.

An American and a Dutchman were working for Lago. The Dutchman was painting and fell down from the tanks. He fell flat on his face. The American came to visit him in the hospital. "I came to see how you feel," he said. "I viel flat on my face" answered the Dutchman.

Viel in Dutch means to fall. Therefore, the Dutchman misunderstood the Americans intentions for paying the visit.

The following joke reveals complications leading to an argument due to lack of communication.

An English speaking man came to work for Lago. He couldn't speak nor understand Papiamentu. One day he saw a hat fly off an Aruban's head. He ran after the hat and

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An American was working for Lago. One day there

returned it to the Aruban. "Masha danki" said the Aruban. The English man looked annoyed and said, "Is that nice?" "I have a good heart, I return your hat, and you call me a donkey!"

The next joke helps express the way many Arubans feel toward their American boss. I have been informed that Arubans feel that they are often taken advantage of by American employers. It seems that Arubans get poorer salaries and worse working conditions than an American employed by an American boss.

An Aruban signed a contract with an American employer stating that he will receive his pay on Friday. When the first Friday came, he didn't receive his pay. The Aruban said nothing, but decided to wait for the following Friday. The next week came and he still was not paid. A few weeks passed and the Aruban still did not receive his pay. Finally, he went to his boss and said, "I have not gotten paid for several weeks and the contract says I will be paid on Friday." "That's right" said the boss, "But it does not say which Friday of which year."

This of course is an exaggeration, as most jokes are, but it does give an example of how Arubans are sometimes discriminated against (which a few of my informants have related to me) when working for an American.

Lago is not the only factor for miscommunication. So many languages being spoken on one small island is a great cause for miscommunication. One of the greatest ways

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to be confused in another language is by an idiom, which never has an accurate translation. A few jokes express humorous situations that developed because of idiomatic miscommunication.

A man went to a fancy restaurant. He dressed accordingly in a tuxedo. (Tuxedo in Spanish is called "smoking"). He saw a sign saying "no smoking" and went home to change out of his tuxedo.

A man was invited to a fancy dinner party. The invitation informed him to wear a "traje de noche" (an idiom for formal wear). So, taking this literally (which is "suit of night") the man arrived in his pajamas.

Another aspect of communication humor on Aruba is with the Dutch, who, of course, speak the national language. When there is one national language and a series of common languages spoken, it is obvious that there is bound to be a communication problem in the interaction of any two individuals with two different languages. Two such jokes are:

An American man went to the Dutch Mill (a discoteque) and was dancing with a Dutch girl he met there. As the evening wore on, he grew to like her and said to her, "My sweetheart." She answered, "Yes, I always sweat hard when dancing so much."

There was a Dutchman who came to Aruba from Holland. While living on Aruba, he met many Arubans whom he befriended. His friends taught him some simple Aruban words

(like masha danki, bon, etc.). One day the sister of his Aruban friend died. He visited his friend to comfort him. The Dutchman attempted to console his friend in Papiamentu, to be more affective. He wanted to say "What happens to you can only be for the best." He tried to translate this into Papiamentu and said, "Con ta be amigo e ta bon rabo " which means -- "It is good for you."

Of course, this goes to show a problem that would easily arise in this case due to a language barrier.

Some other jokes on communication dealing with still other languages are:

A Portugese man went to buy bread. He went to the store of a Dutchman and asked for "pan" (bread). The owner said, "I don't have a pen, but I can give you a pencil."

A seaman from Bonaire went to the states. When he got there, he was asked for his papers. "What does he want?" asked the seaman. "Paper" said the captain of the ship. Misunderstanding the word for "Pepper" the seaman said, "Tell him I'm sorry, but I can't help him, this is a ship, not a grocery."

Some other communication jokes about interactions with people from the states are:

There were three Americans who came to Aruba. On the way to Aruba they stopped in Puerto Rico, where they were able to pick up three Spanish terms: "nosotros", "por el dinero" and "con mucho gusto", which they heard many Puerto Ricans using. When they arrived in Aruba, there had been a

BANK robbery. The police, seeing the Americans on the street, approached them and asked them if they saw who did it, in Popiamento. The Americans, not realizing this was Popiamento, answered in Spanish, trying to be as helpful as possible. So, they answered with the few words they knew. "Nosotros" said the Americans. The police were amazed that they found the bandits so quickly and asked "why?" The Americans answered, "por el dinero" (for the money) again not realizing what they were saying. "Alright" said the police, we are taking you into the police station. Come with us. "Con mucho gusto" answered the Americans (With much pleasure).

Another such joke of misunderstanding the language deals with an American in Curocoa. This joke could have been placed in the tourist section, but since the main emphasis is on lack of communication rather than tourism, it appears in this section.

An American went to Curocoa. He asked a Curocoan where Spritzer & Furhman is. (This is a joke in itself, since there are so many Spritzer & Furhman's on Curocoa). The Curocoan could not speak English and pointed straight ahead to a bridge and said, "No bira" meaning don't turn. The American said "Thank you, can I buy you a beer for your help?" The Curocoan did not understand and said, "No, no, no bira, no bira!" and pointed straight ahead. The American left, going in the direction the Curocoan pointed to. The Curocoan then turned to his friend and said "How do you like that, Just like an American, I have him my help and he

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couldn't even offer me a beer!"

The next two jokes deal with people who speak the same language. Even though the same language is spoken, there is still a possibility of miscommunication. Many words have double meanings. In these cases, puns arise, where there is a play on words, resulting in the same word being used with different connotations, leading to a misunderstood concept or idea.

This next joke actually happened not too long ago and was heard on radio. It was the result of a word in Popiamento. "Eggs" in Popiamento is "hueros." However, this word has a sexual connotation as well, referring to a man's genitals.

The announcer on a radio quiz program called up a housewife. He asked her what the common name for NACL was. She didn't know the answer. The announcer tried giving her a hint and said "What do you put on your husband's eggs (hueros) in the morning?" The woman replied, Oh, I know now, Talcum Powder!"

The next joke deals with two English speaking individuals.

An English man went to a doctor. The man was employed as a mason. The doctor examined him and told him to go into the next room and make a "stool". The man replied, "Sorry doctor, I can't make a stool. I'm a mason. not a carpenter."

From these given jokes, it can be seen how easy one can be misunderstood. Some of the most basic reasons for

a lack of understanding throughout the world are due to a communication gap. With a good sense of humor, these misunderstandings can be laughed at and told to others as jokes, having other people share the fun. However, anyone lacking a sense of humor can easily be annoyed by a communication problem. Therefore, it can be said that in this case, whether something is considered hysterically funny or enragingly upsetting depends on the sense of humor and tolerance on the parts of the individuals involved. If people only learn to laugh at themselves sometimes when things are misunderstood, we could have a happier world. I found this to be the case on Aruba. The people would openly laugh at themselves if something was misunderstood. They seldomly got angry over such trivial matters, and would often joke about them.

# Informants

Name	Age	Occupation
Ito Tromp	31	Government official
Solomon Boekhoudt	30	Postal Worker
Mrs. Boekhoudt	60's	Housewife
Percy Jeandor	30	Government worker
Cornelius Yarzagaray	50's	Owms Andicouri (beach)
Brenda White	18	Sales girl
Anna Pick	60's	Store owner
Ambar Maduro	17	Student
Juan Richardson	17	Student
Gregory St. Aubyn	19	Student
Michael Phillip	24	Draughtsman for Parsons
Lourdes Nicolaas	20	Shop girl
Sylvia (all the name she gave)	19	Student
Artie de Vries	24	Teacher
Barbara Oduber	21	Office clerk
Rudolf Wester	15	Student
Charles Brouns	53	Bar owner
Sally Chichi	27	Government worker
Gloria Arindell	22	Housemaid
Godfrey St. Aubyn	21	Welder